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8 July 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Plans
Director of Training

SUBJECT : Clandestine Service Senior Seminar

1. GENERAL:

The first, experimental running of the CS Senior Seminar was held in Room 1 D 35 of Headquarters Building from 26 May through 20 June 1969. The history of the Seminar, from idea to fruition, is a long (ten months) and checkered one. It has been meticulously recorded in Seminar files for future use and guidance, so no attempt will be made to present a comprehensive account here. However, it should be made clear for the record that the undersigned did not work full-time on this project, that drastic alterations in the original proposal rendered considerable preliminary work ultimately irrelevant, and that the project lapsed intermittently into dormancy.

2. BACKGROUND:

In July 1968 the DDP enunciated the need for "an operations course for senior officers of the Clandestine Service." The broad concepts which he outlined at that time to [] and the DDTR were subsequently translated by the [] into a proposal sent to all CS Division and Staff Chiefs as DDP Memorandum 8-3198, dated 12 September 1968. At that time the undersigned was designated jointly by the DDP and the DTR to design, construct, recommend, and coordinate a Seminar responsive to the DDP requirement. In the following months thinking on the Seminar concept underwent major modifications in regard to nature and scope, most of which were prompted by the written Division and Staff reactions to the original draft proposal and the results of supplementary personal discussions

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with all CS elements involved. On 5 February 1969, after consideration of all pertinent views, the DDP made several basic decisions regarding the Seminar's emphasis, scope, length, content, and membership. These were communicated to all CS Division and Staff Chiefs in DDP Memorandum 9-0588 (Attachment A), dated 18 February 1969, and constituted the guidelines for all preparatory work on the Seminar. Worth special note, perhaps, is the fact that one unique and vital aspect of the original Seminar concept remained intact from beginning to end: preparation by the Seminar of papers setting forth findings and recommendations on certain critical and stubborn problems of the CS.

3. COORDINATION:

25X1C Preparations for the Seminar were coordinated closely with the [] and, at his request, on key issues occasionally with [] as well. As soon as [] was appointed Seminar Chairman, copies of all correspondence regarding the Seminar were sent to him, and he was consulted on all pertinent matters. While responsibility for working with the Divisions and Staffs and for making all preparations, substantive and administrative, rested with the undersigned, three aspects of the Seminar were handled by the [] on the DDP's behalf:

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- a. choice of discussion topics;
- b. the procedure for nomination and selection of Seminar candidates; and
- c. designation of the Seminar Chairman.

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4. PREPARATIONS FOR THE SEMINAR:

a. Preparatory work on the Seminar consisted mainly of the following:

- (1) Drafting of an overall agenda for the four-week Seminar.
- (2) Solicitation of reactions, ideas, and recommendations from all CS Division and Staff chiefs and, subsequently, from those officers designated by them as referents for collaboration on the Seminar (see Attachment B).
- (3) Working with the Seminar referents to formulate the "definition of problem" statements in a fashion which would indicate approaches to the discussion topics most likely to be productive.
- (4) Identification of pre-Seminar reading items: background papers, doctrinal studies, Book Dispatches, and in-house papers pertinent to the agenda problems. (See Attachment C for the indices of reading kits supplied to each Seminar member.)
- (5) Identification of and consultation with officers who could make particularly good presentations to the Seminar on any of the discussion topics.

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(6) Detailed preparation of the first, backdrop week on The U.S. and the World Today, The CS in a Changing World, and The National Security Process.

b. Planning and preparations were rendered more difficult by late changes in the Seminar agenda. On 22 April 1969 CS Career Management was replaced with Structure of the CS, and on 6 May 1969 Covert Action Today and Emerging Elites replaced []

[] These changes inevitably negated some work already done. Also, judging from remarks made, inferences drawn -- rightly or wrongly -- from the fact of these changes had an adverse effect on some of the Seminar members.

c. Despite the long lead time on the Seminar, we were suddenly faced, because of the changes noted above, with the necessity of doing a great deal of research and contact work in the very last weeks before the Seminar. Accordingly, arrangements were made for two senior officers from [] to assist the undersigned for two weeks in preparing the data base and schedules for the CS Structure and Covert Action/Emerging Elites topics. Their unstinting effort significantly affected the quality of these portions of the Seminar.

d. However, a much more important factor than shifting concepts and agenda changes in inhibiting the best possible preparation for a successful seminar was simply that of attitude. The undersigned knew that two factors were absolute prerequisites to success:

- (1) the genuine support of the Division and Staff chiefs; and
- (2) the attribution of high prestige to the Seminar so that senior CS officers would lend their wholehearted support and welcome association with the Seminar.

Every step taken, every contact made, every discussion held was informed by the foregoing realization. Even so, the first signs of resistance and the first frustrations were not long in coming. The timing of the proposal, coincident with the BALPA cuts, suggested to some that the Seminar was devised to take up some senior personnel slack. The Division and Staff responses to the initial draft proposal were, frankly, not overly enthusiastic. What positive reaction there was, was cast largely as agreement in principle, accompanied by substantial "but's"--always a sure sign of trouble ahead. Consequently, a concerted attempt was made in follow-up personal discussions to sharpen the focus and objectives of the Seminar, to solicit everyone's ideas (most assiduously from just those who were most intransigent), and to involve the Divisions and Staffs in every possible way: in the selection of discussion topics, the formulation and definition of problem statements, and in the choice of conference techniques most appropriate

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to a problem-tackling Seminar. It was constantly stressed that this was a CS seminar, that what came out of it would be only as good as what the CS put into it, that the undersigned's job was simply to coordinate the contributions of the Divisions and Staffs, and, that the overriding motivation we all would have in this important joint effort was the best conceivable one: the possibility of positively affecting the effectiveness and course of the Clandestine Service.

Despite this approach, ambivalence toward the Seminar remained on the part of various CS elements. Resistance to change and intrinsic human inertia was too strong, and collaboration proved very uneven. While some Divisions and Staffs provided willing and exemplary cooperation, and made solid contributions, others lent perfunctory assistance, took a dog in the manger attitude, or refused cooperation altogether. In contacts with certain CS elements the self-fulfilling prophecy surfaced. One was first told that the Seminar 'won't work', and then the collaboration which could make it work was withheld. In regard to these elements, one could only push ahead doggedly and, without special pleading, attempt to bring to bear whatever leverage reason might hold.

5. COMPOSITION OF THE SEMINAR:

a. Twelve officers, ten GS-15's and two GS-16's, participated in the Seminar. Their average age was 49 and their average length of Agency service was 19 years. All Divisions and Staffs were represented except WH, SB, and . An officer had been scheduled to attend the Seminar, but was forced to withdraw because of a sensitive and important project which required his full-time attention. A list of members is included in the Seminar agenda, enclosed as Attachment D.

b. The level of active participation by Seminar members varied considerably, and there is some doubt as to whether the group as a whole possessed the depth and breadth of operational and managerial experience to permit this Seminar approach to CS problems to realize its maximum potential. Incidentally, a reservation along this line was expressed by the former DTR at the time the participants were being selected. It was later echoed by a couple Seminar members themselves and, privately, by a few of the speakers. Not surprisingly, the majority of Seminar members (in their written critiques) judged the participants to have been well selected, although several recommended representation from all Divisions and the inclusion of a few officers at the Division COPS or Deputy Division and Staff level.

6. SEMINAR CONTENT AND PRESENTATION:

a. The self-explanatory Seminar agenda is enclosed as Attachment D. It consisted of a four-day introductory phase and

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three problem-tackling weeks. In the first week the Seminar took a look at the role of the United States on the world scene today, at the ramifications for the CS of that changing role, and finally, at changes in the national security process with the advent of a new administration. [redacted] a member of the Board of National Estimates, and [redacted] Special Assistant to the DDP, had given careful and thoughtful attention to those segments for which they acted as discussion leaders. Also, those who made individual contributions to coverage of the national security process had obviously tailored their presentations to the level and needs of the Seminar as outlined in discussions with them. The total effect on the Seminar of the four days -- and particularly of those devoted to The CS in a Changing World -- can hardly be overstated. Every Seminar member, including those who had initially expressed skepticism concerning the usefulness of the first week, indicated in their written critiques that they found this portion very useful. Moreover, two Seminar members commented orally that they would have found the problem-tackling weeks "almost impossible" without the stimulation of this introductory phase. Their reference was primarily to the inevitable relevance of almost everything discussed to the forthcoming examination of the Structure of the CS. Only with a knowledge of how the Clandestine Service and its functions relate to the production and uses of finished intelligence, to changing requirements in a changing world -- in fact, how the CS fits into the whole definition and pursuit of national security -- can one realistically examine the suitability of current CS structure to CS missions.

b. The Seminar examined the following topics: Structure of the CS, Non-Official Cover, Covert Action Today, and Emerging Elites. The time and attention devoted to these topics (as well as the definitiveness of the respective products) were on a descending scale in the order cited. In fact, the Structure of the CS topic was given by far the highest priority. It was considered to be the most important and, in a sense, to comprehend many facets of all the others. At the opposite end of the scale, somewhat cursory, but nevertheless serious, attention was given to the matter of Emerging Elites as a target. Scheduling, some firm and some purposefully flexible, of outside contributions had been prepared for all of the topics. However, as the Seminar progressed and, particularly, as the group gained confidence during the first problem-tackling week, the scheduling and Seminar procedures grew increasingly informal. And, in some instances, speakers were invited back to supplement their previous remarks or to clarify points specified by the group. Enclosed as Attachment E are supplementary schedules for the last three weeks of the Seminar.

c. The four papers produced by the Seminar were forwarded to the DDP by the Seminar Chairman on 24 June 1969.

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7. CRITIQUE OF THE SEMINAR BY MEMBERS:

An unabridged consolidation of the written critiques of all Seminar members is enclosed as Attachment F.

8. COORDINATOR'S COMMENTS:

a. Certain deficiencies exhibited themselves in the course of the Seminar. A brief recital of these may be useful as a basis for improvement or modification of any future Seminar:

(1) Although some participants had evidently studied the pre-Seminar reading materials (the common documentary base from which, it was hoped, discussion could proceed), it was clear that others had not adequately prepared. Several times members vaguely recalled some document or other which "would be useful and pertinent if we had it", only to be gently told that it was in the reading kit. (By the way, the one member who found the pre-Seminar reading material "of no value" told the undersigned he had not looked at the material.) However, admonitions concerning the need for preparation had been incorporated into various memoranda sent to the members. Attachment G is an example. Admittedly, it is difficult for people to do pre-Seminar reading in the course of their regular work day. One possible solution is to start the Seminar with a day or two devoted to the study of the documents in the reading kits.

(2) There was a deficiency in Seminar technique. In response to a request, management training officers in OTR's Support School had worked out a three hour program (to precede the first problem-tackling week) of reading material, films, and lectures aimed at arming the Seminar participants with the tools and a common framework for the type of systematic group effort in which they would be engaged. For various reasons, however, the Seminar did not actually take advantage of such a capsulized presentation on problem-solving methods. Conceivably, it may have paid dividends all out of proportion to the time sacrificed. Probably the Coordinator should have worked out specific Seminar techniques in advance, but it is doubtful that the Seminar as a whole would have been receptive to OTR-devised methods. There seemed to be a decided predilection on the part of the group for improvisation.

(3) As mentioned in paragraph 5 above, the makeup of the Seminar membership itself may well have represented a deficiency.

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(4) ☐ could not have been more accommodating in making space available -- not only the conference room itself but adjacent rooms for team work as well. Nevertheless, an inside room with rather noisy air conditioning left something to be desired, and some cabin fever testiness developed during the last week of the Seminar.

(5) If at all possible, the Seminar Chairman should be free of other duties in the last, say, three weeks before the Seminar to allow closest, active collaboration with the Coordinator. ☐

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designated Chairman from among the Seminar membership, obviously had no control over this factor. However, the question remains whether such designation from within the Seminar is advisable or, indeed, fair to the Chairman.

(6) The uneven nature of cooperation from the Divisions and Staffs undoubtedly adversely affected the overall quality of the Seminar. It would be advisable to assure somehow the convinced and committed cooperation of all CS elements. Broadly-based support and participation in the Seminar itself of all Divisions and Staffs would serve to make it a truly CS seminar.

b. It is important now, with the experience of this experimental running behind us, to re-examine the whole concept, nature, and purpose of the Seminar. Its success cannot really be judged at this point, although there is considerable evidence that the members themselves profited from it. Nevertheless, the undersigned has the nagging feeling that we have here neither fish nor fowl. Careful thought should be given to the creation of a State-type (but much shorter) Senior Seminar which would quite frankly have an educational, perspective-widening objective. Reactions of this Seminar's members to the first week strongly suggest that this would be useful. Alternatively -- or, better yet, additionally -- consideration could be given to somewhat shorter, single-topic Seminars which would permit intensive concentration on one problem and, even more important, would more likely attract wider and generally more senior officers (e.g., at the Division COPS level). If seminars of the latter type were launched, an OTR role would continue to be extremely advisable. In arranging the external contributions to discussion of topics in this Seminar, it was very apparent that OTR's "neutral" position facilitated a balanced program and an almost equal-time presentation of conflicting views. It also enhanced objectivity and ensured that pertinent written data of whatever persuasion were not ignored.

9. POST-SEMINAR DISCUSSION:

Seminar members evidenced strong interest in the post-Seminar discussion suggested by the DDP. As previously indicated, the DDP planned to give the Seminar participants his reaction to their findings and recommendations. Also such a session would provide an opportunity for a candid and unfettered exchange on the various problems studied and a chance to add further thoughts or, if necessary, clarify the rationale behind the Seminar's proposals.

10. Although considerable stress has been put in this report on deficiencies, so that they might point the way toward improvement, it should be noted that the Seminar actually went quite well, perhaps as well as could be expected. Perhaps its most important feature was

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simply providing a framework within which senior officers were forced by the requirement of producing creditable papers to think constructively about some topics which may not have been their favorites. Many CS officers have developed, by chance or choice, somewhat one-sidedly. It was both interesting and encouraging to observe some of the Seminar members seeking information and positive solutions on matters which they were disposed by inclination and experience to denigrate or ignore. Occasionally one detected changes in perspective as the discussions progressed and, among middle-aged CS officers, such changes are often exceedingly difficult.

11. It was a privilege for the undersigned to be associated with this new undertaking. It was realized at the outset that it would encounter some resistance and, perhaps, entail considerable frustration. However, difficulties anticipated can be accepted very philosophically. And, furthermore, they were far outweighed by the pleasure of productive association with many CS officers of extraordinary intelligence and good will.


"signed"


Coordinator,
C.S. SENIOR SEMINAR

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